

MINUTES  
APRIL 29, 2014  
FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015 - BUDGET SESSION  
LAURENS COUNTY COUNCIL  
HISTORIC COURTHOUSE – PUBLIC SQUARE  
COUNTY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

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**ATTENDANCE:**    **COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT-** County Council Chairman Jim Coleman and Vice Chairman Edward McDaniel; Council Members Diane Anderson, Ted Nash, David Pitts, and Joe Wood.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT** – Councilman Keith Tollison (work out of state).

**COUNTY STAFF:** Laurens County Administrator, Ernest Segars; Laurens County Clerk to Council Betty Walsh; Laurens County Attorney, Sandy Cruickshanks, and Finance Director, Lisa Kirk.

**DEPARTMENT HEADS PRESENT:** Laurens County Human Resources Manager, Debi Parker; Laurens County Sheriff's Department – Captain Coats.

**PRESS:** Vic McDonald, *The Clinton Chronicle*; Corey Engle, *The Laurens County Advertiser*.

**SCHEDULED MEETING AGENDA ITEMS** - ① Overview of first draft of the Fiscal Year 2014 – 2015 Budget; ② Budget Discussion among Council; ③ Scheduling of subsequent budgetary work session(s).

**MEETING NOTIFICATION** - The County Council Members, Department Heads and the Press were informed of the budget session meeting in a timely manner.

**CALL TO ORDER** – Councilman Coleman called the April 29, 2014 budget session of Laurens County Council to order at 5:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers of the Historic Courthouse.

**FIRST DRAFT - BUDGET DELIBERATIONS** – Administrator Segars said, “You will note that within your budget, there are no cost of living increases, one (1) new employee, no new programs and uncommitted capital item requests of \$1,094,552. This draft includes the General Fund, Emergency Medical Services, Victim’s Assistance and the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund. I think this is a good, based document that the County can survive on. Within the law, we are recommending all that we can as revenue. The overall revenue is projected to increase over a million dollars (\$1,000,000) as compared to the previous year budget of 2014. This is based on using the Local Option Sales Tax. The Departmental requested budgets cannot be funded as such without the use of the Local Option Sales Tax. There is currently a six (6) mill levy in place for reserves, four (4) mills for capital improvements, the Local Option Sales Tax at twenty nine percent (29%) and fund balance reserves.”.

Proposed Revenue Summary:

\$ 1,020,000.00		100% of the six (6) mill levy for reserves
	\$ 680,000.00	Four (4) mills for Capital Improvements
	\$ 820,000.00	29% Local Option Sales Tax Revenues
	\$ 611,185.00	Additional funding from Fund Balance Reserves

Councilman Wood asked if there were any new taxes represented in the budget. Administrator Segars replied that there was not but could be added, what is given is based on population and consumer price index and is noted in the Revenue Summary in the proposed budget book.

Revenue Summary:

Revenue Source	FYE 2014 Approved Budget	FYE 2015 Requested Budget	FYE 2015 Variance	Variance %
General Property Taxes	11,727,630	11,417,389	(310,241)	-2.7%
Licenses and Permits	400,000	369,900	(30,100)	-8.1%
Intergovernmental Revenue	3,495,805	3,507,840	12,035	0.3%
Charge for Services	2,886,506	3,168,475	281,969	8.9%
Investment Earnings	25,000	25,000	0	0.0%
Rental of County Property	6,500	6,500	0	0.0%
Miscellaneous Revenue	50,000	62,500	12,500	20.0%
Other Financing Sources	35,000	10,000	(25,000)	-250.0%
Local Option Sales Tax 29%	0	820,000	820,000	100.0%
Reserves (Fund Balance)	908,543	611,185	(297,358)	-48.7%
Reserves (6 Mills)	1,009,500	1,020,000	10,500	1.0%
Capital Improvements (4 mills)	673,000	680,000	7,000	1.0%
<b>TOTAL REVENUES AVAILABLE</b>	<b>21,217,484</b>	<b>21,698,789</b>	<b>481,305</b>	<b>2.2%</b>

\*\*CPI for FY 2015 budget millage increase is 1.46%, as reported by SCAC.

Administrator Segars added, “There is a new Emergency Medical Services Station included in the budget this year as well as staffing the station and equipping it. This is a necessary request due to volume of calls received and will be considered the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) transport station for Laurens County in well over twenty five (25) years. This is not really included in this budget but does need to be discussed as a major capital expense. It could be housed at the Highway #252 Station with only equipment and staff added”.

Councilman Wood asked why the Detention Center salary account had been reduced by one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000)? Mrs. Kirk replied, “That is because they are fully staffed now and in years past, it would have included the longevity increases and overtime pay. The noted numbers in the budget reflect what is their current annual salary, but, they are going to have to have more money to cover salaries”.

Councilman Wood stated, “This means the raise has become a wash over time? And, where is the two hundred thousand added back into the 2014 budget?” Administrator Segars replied, “Too much may have been appropriated for the increase and that more accurate numbers would be produced this year”. Mrs. Kirk replied, “Technically now, monies were not saved because the Sheriff’s Department is using it. We could have let go seasonal employees go and hired back someone making a lot less than the one that left. That will make a huge difference. You are not going to spend what you budgeted”.

Chairman Coleman asked if any Council Members had any questions or comments on the revenue side of the budget; that if Council is not willing to accept the revenue page, serious cutting needs to be considered.

Councilman Wood stated that he did not agree with the Local Option Sales Tax because it is not our money.

Chairman Coleman said, “Laurens County is receiving funds from the State at least seven hundred fifty thousand dollars than we are entitled to. I know of two (2) County that actually put this on the tax billings to make up the difference that the State is not sending. I believe that the people need to know why there is a charge”.

Councilman Nash said, “I do not like taking the twenty nine percent (29%). Several years ago the voters agreed to the one hundred percent (100%) rollover and now we take twenty nine percent (29%). For several years now we have had a six (6) mill to build the reserve fund and have used for various things already. If we cannot give back the twenty nine percent (29%) then we do not need to tax the six (6) mill too”.



Administrator Segars reminded Council that it took three (3) times taking the Local Option Sales Tax to the people to get it approved. I agree that we are all concerned over the public and taxes but, the actions by the State actually locked things up”.

Councilwoman Anderson stated, “If have to use the Local Option Sales Tax, we also need to ask the Department Heads to make some cuts with their requests”.

Councilman Pitts said, “I cannot understand how we are going from 60.7 mills to 60.16 mills of millage and bring in two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) less. The value of a mill has not gone down. This whole budget is based on what the Auditor gives Administration. I just feel like we have some flawed figures coming out of the Auditor’s Office. I understand about manufacturing and how that changes, what I do not understand is to have an increase in millage but a reduction in the amount of total property taxes”. Administrator Segars replied, “If you look back on last year’s audit I think part of this reflects on receiving less money by several hundred thousand dollars. Mrs. Kirk looked back on this audit and based revenue figures on what was reported in the audit”. Mrs. Kirk replied, “When I spoke with the Auditor and based on what we discussed, the fee-in-lieu-of-taxes was down last year and we were actually off almost this same amount within the budget”.

Councilman Pitts questioned that in the budget, he did not see where Administration had made any recommendations like in past years. Mrs. Kirk replied, “We did not create a recommended column because we have given you exactly what the Department Heads have asked for.....we made no recommendations”.

Councilman Pitts questioned the seven hundred three thousand dollars (\$703,000) increase in expenses; asking if it was due to the salary increases? Mrs. Kirk replied, “One hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) of it belongs to the Clerk of Court, due to the murder trial; one hundred seventy six thousand dollars (\$176,000) is the increase in employee benefits; the costs for retirement is going up as well as workman’s compensation; and, with the Sheriff’s Department and the Detention Center being fully staffed that sent the salary figures up also.”

Administrator Segars said, “The capital murder case coming up has not happened in well over thirty (30) years. Depending on the length of the trial, it could run into hundreds of thousands of dollars”.

- Clerk of Court...2014 approved budget \$629,149...2015 requested budget \$741,093....\$11,944 variance (15.1%)
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Chairman Coleman stated that the Solicitor requested to hold the trial in Laurens County and these are the approximate costs to the County for holding this trial here.

Councilman Wood asked if the Solicitor had requested more money in his budget this year? Administrator Segars replied that he had.

Description	Actual	Actual	Budget	Y-T-D 1/31/2014	
				Actual	Requested
Solicitor's Office	\$222,000	\$262,000	\$262,000	\$196,500	\$278,100

Chairman Coleman reminded Council, “There were several requests for employees in the budget and that the only one seen recommended is for Emergency Medical Services. The Probate Judge has requested new employees and they do need help”. Administrator Segars replied, “The Probate Judge does need help with processing of wills and probate documents. It does need to be added back into the budget. The EMS is requesting an Assistant Director and I feel it to be justified too. There are a number in the requests that we do need.” Attorney Cruickshanks echoed the same justification and added that it would be a fee neutral situation where the paperwork and close-outs would be bring in more fees from Probate.

Councilman Pitts asked, “By adding the part time employee to the Magistrates Office last year, did it actually pay for itself? I know we are not there yet, but the salaries in the magistrate office have jumped up.” Administrator



Segars replied that he was not certain about the part time employee and that the Magistrate salaries are set by state law and that longevity may be factored into the budget numbers.

DEPT	DEPARTMENT	TOTAL EMPLOYEES	FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES	PART-TIME EMPLOYEES	TEMPORARY EMPLOYEES	PER CALL EMPLOYEES
534	MAGISTRATE	10	6	4		
538	PROBATE JUDGE	7	7			

Councilman Pitts questioned when reassessment would occur? County Attorney Cruickshanks replied that it would be seen in either 2015 or 2016.

Councilman Wood said, “We have a pot of money here in the County that we have to work within. The fee-in-lieu-of-tax monies, when a new plant comes in we have to provide more services but yet we are not able to building up this pot of money anymore from these funds. I would like to see one hundred percent (100%) of these funds to come back to the County to help us build up our funds. I’m not trying to take anything from the school systems, I’m trying to help ourselves.” Administrator Segars commented, “That it could be done. Our fund balance is still healthy and we have tapped all of the sources towards the fund balance.”

Chairman Coleman stated, “My personal tax bill on my personal house has remained the same for the last three (3) years and we have not gone up on any taxes. This Council has been very frugal and has provided some salary increases and more detention center officers.”

Councilman Pitts asked if there was any way that we could go to the Department Heads telling them that we can avoid going into the fund balance by six hundred eleven thousand dollars (\$600,011.00) and ask them to make cuts where they see that they could afford to cut. Administrator Segars replied that he doubted cuts in that range.

First Draft - Fiscal Year 2014-2015 - Laurens County General Fund Summation

512	Administration	376,809	344,782	221,557	328,718
512	County Attorney	113,032	117,419	64,756	116,330
513	Airport	61,018	82,982	35,898	82,970
514	Assessor	341,911	372,165	201,684	374,738
515	Auditor	332,950	454,829	263,949	482,747
516	Buildings/Grounds	747,052	726,102	467,220	736,525
517	Clemson Extension	34,057	34,800	27,657	34,800
518	Clerk of Court	618,364	629,149	359,657	741,093
519	Communications	829,400	883,885	436,783	877,667
520	Contingency	147,816	150,000	37,653	150,000
521	Coroner	139,464	154,742	80,164	156,042
522	County Council	105,735	102,509	60,557	103,062
523	Detention Center	2,704,289	3,107,280	1,570,488	3,007,427
524	E 9-1-1	446,153	537,378	237,545	544,028
526	Emergency Management	92,288	127,498	65,444	128,232
527	Finance Department	183,570	172,801	102,138	167,994
531	Health Department	10,706	14,250	7,319	14,250
532	Inspection/Permits	336,903	359,688	163,076	355,882
533	Library	627,925	659,547	361,602	667,152
534	Magistrate	448,959	474,675	251,279	473,049
535	Parks/Recreation/Tourism	117,594	176,107	78,829	184,584
536	Human Resources	77,594	117,054	67,235	124,973
538	Probate Judge	214,607	233,799	123,171	238,333
539	Public Works	139,958	145,771	72,627	147,900
540	Registration/Elections	206,074	197,529	78,221	187,484
548	Risk Management	39,846	39,344	22,356	40,592
541	Roads/Bridges	708,836	795,127	403,359	794,277
542	Sheriff	3,795,559	3,686,624	2,260,338	3,918,267
543	Social Services	14,166	13,000	11,040	16,026
544	Treasurer	357,220	417,591	198,006	361,833
545	Veterans Affairs	129,982	132,767	74,040	136,108
546	Purchasing/Vehicle Maintenance	72,337	71,641	42,741	73,151
551	Insurance and Benefits	4,002,036	4,524,815	3,219,656	4,701,694
555	Capital Leases	28,782	455,804	451,891	395,968
555	Capital Expenditures	311,224	196,660	88,185	284,032
561	Miscellaneous	95,246	108,300	78,684	108,300

LAURENS COUNTY COUNCIL  
MINUTES – APRIL 29, 2014  
FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015 BUDGET

562	Local Government Assistance Program	355,827	355,870	270,653	371,750
563	Special Appropriations	32,800	43,200	43,575	47,200
	Funds Transfer from Reserves for Victim's Assistance	0	0	0	23,611

A brief discussion was held on the following special appropriations with no true consensus of funding.

Account Description	FYE 2012 Actual	FYE 2013 Actual	FYE 2014 Budget	Y-T-D 1/31/2014 Actual	FYE 2015 Requested
Literacy Council	0	0	0	5,000	5,000
G.L.E.A.M.N.S.	9,500	9,500	9,500	7,125	9,500
Laurens Fed./Blind	3,600	3,600	5,000	3,750	5,000
Humane Society	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
- ? -	7,000	7,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
Crimestoppers	1,000	0	1,000	0	0
Laurens County Disabilities & Special Needs Board	0	0	0	0	0
Piedmont Tech	0	0	0	0	0
Senior Options	7,700	7,700	7,700	7,700	7,700
Subtotal Non.-Pers. Serv.	33,800	32,800	43,200	43,575	47,200
TOTALS	33,800	32,800	43,200	43,575	47,200

BUDGETS REQUESTED BY ENTITIES - NOT LISTED ABOVE DUE TO FUNDS LIMITATIONS

County Museum	\$ 100,000
Laurens County Disabilities and Special	\$ 100,000
Piedmont Tech	\$ 610,456

Chairman Coleman asked for Administrator Segars to provide an explanation as to the computer needs of the County. Mrs. Kirk replied that Microsoft has discontinued supporting XP and there are computers within the County that use this software will not handle an upgrade and the whole computer needs to be replaced.

**NEXT BUDGET SESSION** – There was a COUNCIL CONSENSUS to meet again on Monday, May 12, 2014 at 5:00 P.M. at the Historic Courthouse, County Council Chambers with Department Heads addressing Council.

**ADJOURNMENT** – There was a COUNCIL CONSENSUS to adjourn the budget session at 6:38 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Betty C. Walsh  
Clerk to Council